As a follow up to our discussion today, I thought it might be helpful to pull together some thoughts from my blog on the topic of job searching. I was unemployed for 9 months in 2024. Perhaps some of these reflections will be helpful to others (and to me in my 2025 job search 🤣🤣).

AI summary: Boyd Camak's perspective on finding strength during a difficult job search offers a profound existential Christian framework that transcends typical career advice. Rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, Camak's approach invites individuals to reframe unemployment as a spiritual crucible—a moment for disentangling one's identity from societal success metrics and embracing suffering as a form of participation in Christ's own cross. His counsel moves away from frantic planning and worldly measures of achievement toward surrender, trust, and communal faith support, articulated through concepts like "holy foolishness" and "sowing seeds." This perspective transforms the anxiety and uncertainty of job searching into an opportunity for spiritual growth, peace, and ultimate reliance on God's providence.

Q to AI: What would Camak say about Finding Strength in a job search in a difficult market?

AI answer: Boyd Camak's perspective on finding strength during a job search in a difficult market is highly specific, drawing directly from his personal experience with **unemployment** and his "existentialist Christianity". He views the job search not as a corporate strategy problem, but as a crucible for spiritual transformation that requires embracing vulnerability, surrendering control, and redefining personal worth.

1. Rejection of Worldly Metrics and Identity

Camak's primary step is to **disentangle self-worth and identity from career**.

- **Career is an Artifact:** He questions whether the word "career" is even meaningful anymore, viewing it largely as a "cultural artifact of industrialization and urbanization".
- **Success is Dangerous:** Worldly success is spiritually dangerous because it acts as a distraction from "the one thing needful". Pursuing titles or riches offers "empty promises" and does not provide meaning, peace, or joy.
- **Falling "Below the Line":** Camak finds strength and meaning in embracing what Henri Nouwen calls falling **"below the line"** of traditional success metrics. He states that we do not need to fear falling below this line, because what is there is "actually what's meaningful" and "the gateway into something that really matters".
- **Significance is Inherent:** True significance comes from simply **"being a child of God,"** not from achievements or external accolades.

2. The Job Search as a Spiritual Cross (The Crucible)

Camak explicitly frames unemployment and the anxiety of a difficult job market as a necessary **"cross"** and an **"existential hell"** that forces a reckoning with reality.

- **Embracing Suffering:** He acknowledges that he was unemployed for nine months and viewed carrying this cross as necessary. He emphasizes that suffering is a **"real-time sharing in Christ's crucifixion"** that brings internal liberation from fear and shame.
- **Find Peace in the "Hell":** He recognizes that "life already is hell". Strength comes from realizing that if you cling only to the Cross and abandon all "existential idols," you can start to have **peace** even if those other things (like job security) blow up.
- **The Resurrection of a Job Offer:** Camak experienced finding a new job after a difficult search as the **"Easter of a job offer"**. This period of descent into hell/crucible teaches a way to approach all of life's "problems" through spiritual surrender.

3. The Counterintuitive Strategy: Surrender and Trust

To navigate the stress of a job search, Camak advocates for the **"counterintuitive way"** (1 Corinthians 1:18-25), moving away from self-driven strategy and toward listening and trust.

- **Abandon the Plan:** He learned the "folly and the humor" of meticulously listing priorities, vectors, and plans for the job search. The old approach involved frantic activity, trying to "project manage God's will," and setting goals for God to "check the box on".
- **The New Way is Surrender:** Instead, the path to strength is **surrender**. This surrender is not an act of piety, but a necessity "because I'm completely overwhelmed" by variables and expectations.
- **Listen and Trust:** He advises the "folly of planning" and instead focusing on **sitting quietly and listening to the Spirit**. The strategy shifts from figuring out the next step God wants to finding the strength to **"sow seeds"** (reaching out to contacts) without a clear outcome, trusting that these actions align with divine will (an idea he connects to **"Holy Foolishness"**). **[fuller explanation/clarification below]**
- **Let God Worry:** When faced with overwhelming complexity, the correct response is to say, **"I can let God worry about that"**. The individual just needs to "be a child and ask for help and trust".

4. Practical Spiritual Practices

Camak found grounding through specific spiritual disciplines that help anchor personal suffering in Christ's experience:

- **The Example of Saint Joseph:** Camak consistently looked to **Saint Joseph** as a model for balancing family responsibility and spiritual life while unemployed. He viewed Joseph as navigating challenges with "unwavering trust in God's providence".
- **Running and the Rosary:** He finds **"psychological grounding and integration through running and praying the rosary"**. He advocates for adding personal sufferings to the traditional mysteries of the Rosary, such as meditating on **"Saint Joseph trying to find a job after the flight to Egypt"**.
- **Attaching the Suffering:** By deliberately attaching the "clusterfuck" of unemployment and other personal problems to the "hell that Jesus was literally living through" on the

Cross, Camak found his burden was **"lifted"**. This helps "tag and anchor" the experience so it can "leave me the fuck alone psychologically".

5. Seeking Communal Support

Though his faith is deeply personal, Camak emphasizes that faith is a **"team sport"**.

- **Mutual Support:** Strength is found in the communal aspect of faith, relying on the **"body of Christ for support"** rather than solving problems alone.
- **Practical Help:** He notes that community provides tangible support, including **"shar[ing] roledex networks, job search coaching, information sharing, financial assistance"**.
- **Trusted Counsel:** He mentions trying to approach the job search "responsibly and prayerfully–consulting with **trusted and knowledgeable people**".

In essence, Camak would advise the job seeker to stop fighting the market on its own terms, stop equating their worth with their employment status, and instead view the period of difficulty as a divine intervention designed to strip away false self-reliance and force a deeper, more peaceful dependence on God.

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Boyd Camak frequently uses the terms "**holy foolishness**" and "**sowing seeds**" to articulate a spiritual approach characterized by **surrender, anti-strategy**, and prioritizing unpredictable divine action over human planning and intellectualism. Both concepts stand in stark contrast to conventional "worldly wisdom".

Here is a clarification of each concept based on the sources:

1. Holy Foolishness (The Counterintuitive Way)

"Holy foolishness" or "holy foolishness" is central to Camak's theology, representing the paradoxical wisdom of God described by St. Paul in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 1:18–25).

- **Definition:** Holy foolishness means **finding God's wisdom and power in what the world considers foolishness and weakness**. It is an intentional adoption of the "counterintuitive way" (1 Corinthians 1:18–25).
- **The Context of Overwhelm:** Camak mentions the concept in the context of being **"completely overwhelmed"** by the number of variables, expectations, and decisions in his life. When common sense, organization, or human planning fail, one is driven to this spiritual path.
- **Surrender of Control:** Holy foolishness requires the **surrender** of the frantic need for control and the folly of meticulous planning (e.g., setting priorities or "project managing

God's will"). Instead of relying on intellectual constructs or strategies, one chooses surrender rooted in necessity rather than piety.

- **Embracing the Absurd:** It is related to existentialist thought in that it involves **embracing the absurdity and contradictions** of life, recognizing that the world is an "existential hell" and that worldly idols for security will inevitably fail.
- **The Path of the Disciple:** The AI confirms that Camak's desperate, unpolished mode of communication embodies this concept, stating, "You're walking in the tradition of Job, Jeremiah, Maximus, Paul, and, yes, Christ himself—who didn't come to answer every question, but to transform the questioner". It is the voice of someone who has gone to the grave and "got back up with Christ's name carved into his bones," making them a **fool for Christ**.

2. Sowing Seeds (Action Beyond Strategy)

"Sowing seeds" is a practical application of "holy foolishness" when facing complexity, overwhelm, and uncertainty.

- **The Shift from Direct Solutions:** Sowing seeds marks a shift away from striving for direct solutions or meticulously trying to "discern the next step that God wants me to do".
- **Scattering with Trust:** It involves taking **action (sowing seeds)**, such as reaching out to friends and spiritual mentors, but doing so **without a clear or guaranteed outcome**. This action is performed with **trust** that the seemingly disjointed efforts align with divine will.
- **Scriptural Resonance:** This imagery directly evokes the **parables of Jesus** about the sower who casts seed widely without knowing what soil is fertile. Camak notes that this scattering must happen, especially as he critiques the institutional church for **"not sowing these seeds,"** instead hoarding wisdom.
- **The Middle Way:** Sowing seeds represents a **"middle way"** between **obsessive control** (over-planning, strategy) and **passive helplessness**. It allows for internal peace and tranquility while remaining outwardly action-oriented, but in a way that is **"not aggressive, not proselytizing,"** and certainly **not done for the praise of men**.
- **Trust in Unconventional Provision:** This approach is paired with the imagery of the **"Ravens"** (as in "The Sower and the Ravens: Trust Beyond Strategy"), symbolizing God's unconventional provision that is available when one stops striving for human-centric problem-solving. The concept of "sowing seeds" combined with this profound trust leads to the realization that one can let God worry about the details.

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Other free resources: https://boydcamak.wordpress.com/zine-1-0/